

Message Text

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SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL

FOLLOWING APPEARED IN WASHINGTON POST DATED JULY 16, 1974:

1. QUOTE CRISIS OVER CYPRUS

THE SITUATION ON THE MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND STATE OF CYPRUS REMAINS CONFUSED, BUT THIS MUCH IS CLEAR: THE COUP LAUNCHED AGAINST THE LEGALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS WAS PLANNED IN ATHENS AND EXECUTED BY THE 650 GREEK OFFICERS WHO, UNDER THE STRANGE AND RESTRICTIVE CYPRIOT CONSTITUTION, COMMAND THE NATIONAL GUARD. THE GUARD IS THE PRINCIPAL MILITARY FORCE IN CYPRUS. JUST LAST FRIDAY, PRESIDENT MAKARIOS CHARGED THAT THE GUARD, "WHICH IS CONTROLLED BY GREEK OFFICERS, HAS BECOME THE MAINSTAY AND SUPPLIER OF THE CRIMINAL EOKA ORGANIZATION," A TERRORIST GROUP FAVORING THE UNION OF CYPRUS WITH GREECE. "ATHENS BEARS GREAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT

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HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN CYPRUS," HE SAID. NO ONE FAMILIAR

WITH THE CYPRIOT SCENE DOUBTS THIS. IT IS SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE THAT 650 GREEK OFFICERS WOULD ACT EXCEPT AT THE ORDERS OF THE ATHENS JUNTA, WHICH APPARENTLY SOUGHT A NATIONALISTIC DIVERSION FROM ITS TROUBLES AT HOME.

THOUGH THE GUARD IS THE PRINCIPAL FORCE IN CYPRUS, MANY OTHER CITIZENS HAVE GUNS. THIS SEEMS TO EXPLAIN THE EARLY REPORTS OF FIGHTING ON THE ISLAND: THE GUARD ON ONE SIDE, PRO-MAKARIOS GREEK CYPRIOTS ON THE OTHER. THERE IS, HOWEVER, AN EVEN MORE MENACING POTENTIAL SOURCE OF VIOLENCE ON CYPRUS EMANATING FROM THE FACT THAT TURKEY IS THE PATRON OF THE MINORITY TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY. THE TURKS HAVE THEIR OFFICERS IN CYPRUS TOO AND, SINCE CYPRUS SITS JUST 50 MILES OFF TURKEY (GREECE IS 400 MILES AWAY), THE TURKISH ARMY IS VERY NEAR. PERENNIAL TENSE OVER CYPRUS, GREECE AND TURKEY HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FEUDING OVER RIGHTS TO OFFSHORE OIL UNDER THE AEGEAN SEA. GREEK NATIONALISM AND TURKISH NATIONALISM ARE A VOLATILE MIX.

THE UNITED STATES HAS LONG BEEN CONCERNED LEST ITS NATO PARTNERS, GREECE AND TURKEY, FALL INTO DISPUTE OR EVEN WAR OVER CYPRUS. IN THIS INSTANCE, HOWEVER, WASHINGTON IS IN A SPECIAL POSITION. FOR MONTHS THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN WARNED THAT A WEAK JUNTA IN ATHENS MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO MAKE A NATIONALISTIC POWER PLAY IN CYPRUS. YET THERE IS NO SIGN THAT WASHINGTON GAVE ATHENS THE STRICT HANDS-OFF WARNING WHICH MIGHT HAVE GIVEN THE JUNTA PAUSE. ON THE CONTRARY, THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION SEEMS TO HAVE DECIDED TO DRIFT ALONG WITH THE JUNTA FOR THE SAKE OF STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS IN THE REGION AS A WHOLE. THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION YESTERDAY WAS CHARACTERISTIC. IT ENTIRELY IGNORED ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THE COUP IS OF ATHENS' MAKING. INSTEAD, THE DEPARTMENT ALLUDED TO THE COUP AS AN "INTERNAL SITUATION" AND OFFERED PIETIES ABOUT "SUPPORTING THE INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF CYPRUS AND ITS CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS." THIS CRISIS FINDS THE UNITED STATES, MOREOVER, WITH ITS INFLUENCE REDUCED NOT ONLY IN GREECE BUT IN TURKEY,

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WHERE A DISPUTE OVER TURKEY'S LIFTING OF ITS OPIUM BAN HAS GOTTEN ENTIRELY OUT OF HAND.

A FRIENDLY STATE IS BEING SUBVERTED BY AN AMERICAN ALLY. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CANNOT BRING ITSELF TO EXPRESS CONCERN EITHER FOR THE PERSONAL FATE OF THE DEPOSED PRESIDENT OR FOR THE POLITICAL FATE OF HIS ELECTED GOVERNMENT. ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO NATO ALLIES, BOTH OF THEM HEAVILY

DEPENDENT ON THE UNITED STATES, IS NOT OUT OF THE

QUESTION. BUT THE ADMINISTRATION IS IN A POOR POSITION
TO RESTRAIN EITHER OF THEM. IT IS HARD TO RECALL, AT
LEAST IN RELATIVELY RECENT TIMES, A MORE PAINFUL
MOMENT IN AMERICAN DIPLOMACY. END QUOTE. INGERSOLL

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